

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE

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December 7, 2006

The Honorable Rob Portman  
Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
725 17th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Portman:

While I will soon be completing my six years as Science Committee Chairman, I wanted nonetheless to outline the path I think the Administration should take concerning science funding in its fiscal 2008 budget.

First and foremost, I hope and expect that the Administration will continue to press forward with the President's American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI). As you probably know, I have been an outspoken cheerleader for the ACI, and the ACI has won the support of the nation's business and education leaders. Most important, the Appropriations Committee in the Senate and the entire House voted for the ACI requests this year. Therefore, I hope your fiscal 2008 requests for the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) will be at levels appropriate for a second year of ACI implementation. We can't slow the rate of increase for these vital agencies even though Congress did not complete its work on appropriations.

I do hope that you will also request additional funds for NSF's valuable education programs, which have been getting short shrift from the Administration, and for NIST's Manufacturing Extension Partnership, which has been so successful in helping small manufacturers maintain and create jobs.

Another area in need of additional attention is research at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which has faced significant cuts since fiscal 2004. If we don't want to be surprised by environmental problems, and the consequent expense of remedying problems we have ignored, we need to invest in research now.

One area particularly in need of additional emphasis, at EPA and across the science agencies, is research on the potential environmental and health consequences of nanotechnology. Industry and environmental groups have been pressing for such work, and the time to undertake it is now before problems occur and a polarized debate develops on the issue. We need a strong, comprehensive, thoughtful, interagency research plan – like that outlined in a recent paper in the journal *Nature* – and the funding to carry it out.

At the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), I urge the Administration to provide both adequate funding to, and rigorous oversight of the two weather satellite procurement programs, NPOESS and GOES-R. NPOESS still needs close monitoring as it tries to get back on track, and GOES-R needs to be managed in a way that ensures that it will not follow in NPOESS' footsteps.

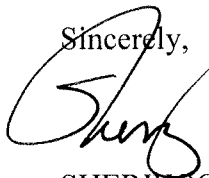
In the Department of Energy's energy supply programs, I urge you to provide adequate funding to the President's Advanced Energy Initiative. For that Initiative to be effective, it must be more than a catchy repackaging of existing efforts moving forward at the current pace. I remain disappointed with the Administration's Climate Change Technology Plan, which ought to provide clear priorities for improving technologies that could limit greenhouse gas emissions. Finally, the Administration needs to rethink its Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP). The focus should be on small-scale, incremental technology demonstrations rather than massive commercial facilities that get ahead of the science and ignore the economics of reprocessing.

Last, but not least, NASA needs additional funding if it is to move ahead with both the Vision for Space Exploration and the space science, earth science and aeronautics research required by the NASA Authorization Act of 2005. There is no reason to launch the Orion Crew Exploration Vehicle before 2014, and there is every reason to retire the Space Shuttle in 2010, as planned.

Most important, NASA's science programs, which are its most successful and beneficial programs, must continue to thrive. The earth science program in particular is in danger of atrophying. At the very, very least, NASA's Science Mission Directorate must receive at least as much as was projected in the runout in the fiscal 2007 budget. Moreover, the "bread and butter" funding for NASA science, known as Research and Analysis, must be the top priority for funding.

I know you are facing many difficult choices as you develop next year's budget but I hope you will focus attention on these important national investments. I value the years you and I have served together and your dedication to the nation's future. Federal research and development programs are an important foundation for that future.

Sincerely,



SHERWOOD BOEHLERT  
Chairman

Keep ACT in  
your priority list  
for attention  
Competition is no  
critic